

CHAPTER 8.0 – GROWTH INDUCING EFFECTS

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requires the analysis of a proposed project's potential to induce growth. Specifically, Section 15126.2(d) requires that environmental documents "...discuss the ways in which the proposed project could foster economic or population growth, or the construction of additional housing, either directly or indirectly, in the surrounding environment..." Growth inducing impacts can occur if a project would induce growth either directly or indirectly in the surrounding environment. Section 15126.2 (d) also states that it cannot be assumed that growth in an area is necessarily beneficial, detrimental, or of little significance to the environment.

A project's potential to induce growth does not automatically mean that it will result in growth. This potential growth-inducing effect is regulated by local governments in California through the development, adoption and implementation of land use plans and policies intended to avoid or minimize the growth inducing potential or pressure created by projects, both individually or cumulatively. Growth occurs through capital investment in new economic opportunities from both public and private entities. Development occurs as a result of economic investment in a particular region. New economic (i.e., employment) opportunities will naturally create the need for infrastructure to support an increased population.

Typically, the growth inducing potential of a project would be considered significant if it fosters growth or a population concentration above what is assumed in local and regional land use plans or in projections made by regional planning groups such as the Southern California Association of Governments. Significant growth impacts could also occur if the project provides infrastructure or service capacity to accommodate growth levels beyond those permitted by local plans and/or policies.

The proposed project is not anticipated to induce growth rather, it will allow SCE to provide electrical service, as required by the CPUC, to current and future customers in the area. Growth and development within South Orange County is managed at the local and county level and is anticipated to occur consistent with general and specific plans prepared and approved by each jurisdiction. Thus, to ensure adequate electrical capacity is available to serve planned development, the project would be considered an essential utility.

The Viejo System Project could be considered growth-inducing if growth results from the direct and indirect employment needed to construct, operate and maintain the project, and/or if growth results from the additional electric power that would be transmitted by the proposed project.

As documented in the project description (Chapter 3), the construction and operation of the proposed Viejo System Project would not affect employment in the project area. SCE anticipates that the project would be constructed by SCE personnel or contract workers. If contract workers are employed they would not cause growth in the area due to the temporary nature of their employment. The proposed Viejo Substation is an unmanned substation and therefore would require no full time personnel. On-site inspection and maintenance activities would occur periodically and may involve 2-3 visits to the facility per month.

As stated in Chapter 2 of this document the construction of the Viejo System Project is proposed to meet the forecasted electrical load and enhance the reliability of service in South Orange County. The Project is required to accommodate predicted future growth and approved development in the area. As noted, South Orange County's electrical needs are currently served from SCE's main electrical grid via the Santiago 220/66 kV Substation and connecting subtransmission and distribution facilities (Santiago System). The Santiago System serves approximately 250,000 metered customers. Currently, there are several heavily loaded substations (Limestone, Chiquita, and O'Neill) located within the south and southeast region of the Santiago System. The load on these facilities has experienced rapid growth in recent years. SCE forecasts that by 2005, projected electrical demand will exceed the operating limits of the transformers currently serving the Santiago System. This Project will respond to future planned development in the area and will improve system reliability to meet existing and future demand.

Operation of the Proposed Viejo System would ensure that necessary transformer capacity is available in time to serve increasing customer load, and that the level of service continues to meet SCE's reliability requirements. The additional capacity would be sufficient to address the forecasted capacity shortfall, as well as meet all of the existing electrical needs in the service area within the foreseeable future. The Project is not believed to remove an impediment to, or to provide an incentive for, additional growth.